

## [God Helped Us]

### GOD HELPED US

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Mrs. Luther Crawford

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Ex-School Teacher, Farm Owner

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and Housewife.

I.B. Hawkes -

“ GOD HELPED US ”

“Yes, we live right across the road here,” said Mr. Ford. “Oh, yes, it's my wife you want to see. I'm sure she'll talk to you, because she likes company. Just go on up there and I'll be there to let you in just as soon as I can put this school bus under shelter.”

Approaching the modern frame house I admired the shrubbery that enhanced the appearance of the well-kept place. I had to go around to the back door where Mr. Ford met me and assisted me up the steps and into a tidy kitchen. Coming in out of the glare of the afternoon sun, I didn't see anyone at first, but when my eyes were accustomed to the shadows I saw a woman sitting very still in a corner of the room. Her face was illuminated by a bright smile.

“I've brought you some company,” said Mr. Ford, when he had introduced me to his wife.

“Sit down over here by me,” she said, as I repeated my name to her. “I was just ironing some pants for my husband, but it's not necessary that I finish them now.” It seemed incredible that a person so drawn 2 and twisted in body should be able to iron clothing, especially difficult pieces such as men's trousers.

“Did you really iron those pants?” I inquired. “Oh yes,” she proudly answered. “I ironed them, and I do all my work now, but I guess I'd better tell you something about my earlier life and about how I got like this. My life at home as a girl I won't say much about. I went to school in Daniellsville, Georgia, and then I taught for 15 years in three different school. Believe it or not, in teaching all three schools I never went but five miles from home. I always went on horseback; you see, we were country people. My father always said, ‘If you can teach at home what's the use of going abroad?’

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"My sister had typhoid fever, and it went into rheumatism which left her crippled for life. It fell to my lot to wait on her. I taught school in the spring and summer. After my long hours at school I'd start nursing her soon as I returned home. You see, she was in such a fix she couldn't stand the covers or nightgowns to touch her. I finally had to quit teaching. I just went to bed with her, night and day, to hold the covers so they wouldn't press on her anywhere. Now, you can imagine what a strain I was in. This went on for weeks 3 When the doctor came one day and found us like that, he flew into a rage and said, 'this had to be stopped! There's no use in both girls dying.' My mother was not well either at that time.

"I'd met Mr. Ford here - I still call him Mr. Ford - and we were planning to get married, but it looked as though I couldn't leave home with no one to look after my mother and sister. You see, I always felt that way about them. I wasn't sure either what married life would be like; that kept me back some.

"After my sister died, my married brother and his wife said they'd take care of mother, Mr. Ford and I married after I was 33 years old. My father had left me a small sum of money, and we decided the best thing to do was invest it in land.

"The year after our marriage - in 1912 - our baby was born dead. Somehow I could never blame the doctors, for I had the best of care, but it left me helpless. I haven't walked [a?] step in long over 20 years now. No, I don't use crutches or wheel chair either. You can see why I am like this today.

"Well, things were going fairly well with our crop. Mr. Ford had to take care of me, for no one could do me any good but him. He worked with me night and day and for 4 years continuously, getting up sometimes twenty-five or thirty times a night, and sometimes not even going 4 to bed a t'all.

"It went on like that until he became so exhausted that he would completely give out and fall asleep. Sometime it would be impossible for me to wake him. You see, I suffered

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agonies all over, and when he went to sleep I couldn't 'rouse him a t'all. He decided to pull my cot up to his bed at night - we didn't sleep together then - and tie a string around my finger and then tie it to his hand. Then, when I couldn't stand it another minute, I'd pull the string. I'd have to keep on pulling harder and harder sometimes for he'd be so tired and worn out that when I pulled the string he'd just shake it off his hand, and turn over and go to sleep. Well, he gave me a stick to punch him with, but I was so weak and gradually losing use of myself, till I couldn't use the stick to any advantage. He kept on working with me and having me treated until finally I got to combing my hair, and then I found I could use my limbs a little.

"It was a terrible sorrow to me when I began to lose strength again and for 12 months I lay helpless again. One night during this relapse our home caught fire. When they came to get me out of the house it took four men to hold me. I was carried to that little cabin you see out there in the back yard. I was still suffering bad, but the doctor said he couldn't 5 give me much dope. He was afraid I'd get in the habit of taking it. I'm telling you this because I was determined not to be a dope addict. The doctor advised Mr. Ford to give me some whiskey, but that didn't ease me pains.

"Mr. Ford and I decided that we were not living up to God's word and will as we should. Now this is where my life changed. I'd always been a Presbyterian, but a lady came and talked to me one day about my soul, and she told me about Christian Science. The doctors weren't doing me any good, so the lady taught Mr. Ford and me to declare and affirm the truth. After we had kept this up a long time I began to move my head and arms. Soon I was stronger. I only weighed 78 pounds when I put my whole heart and mind on God. You see, until we understand and stay steadfast with God we don't get any relief from Him. We cling to Him; we know He is divine love. He has done so much for me since I learned to declare and affirm His love and promises.

"We lived in that cabin in the yard for 12 years. Mr. Ford continued to plant crops of cotton, corn, and vegetables. Of course, we still had our land. We even saved a little money, and

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with a loan we built this house we are living in now. With God's 6 help, Mr. Ford takes me up every morning, dresses me, and puts me in this chair where I'm sitting now. With the help of this chair I can go most any place I want to. He made it just for me. It's the only one I can get about in. In the mornings we first come to the kitchen for breakfast. Here, I'll show you how I walk in my chair." To demonstrate, she folded her gnarled arms as best she could and placed her toes on the floor, then reared back and twisted about one way and then the other, forcing the chair, which is a little higher than the ordinary straight chair, across the floor. She propelled it with almost incredible speed. "I carry my chair with me to church and everywhere else that I have to get out of the car," she said. "After we get to the kitchen, I fix the table and other little things about breakfast while Mr. Ford makes the biscuits. I can't use my fingers enough to make them.

"After breakfast, I wash dishes, churn, sweep the floor, and I even do our washing and, well, you caught me ironing. The reason I'm using this coal-heating [sad?] iron is because my electric iron is being fixed. I burned it out the other day."

I had been so interested in Mrs. Ford's talk that I hadn't realized it was beginning to grow dark. I suddenly knew that I had to go, but first I asked her 7 permission to look through the house. "I was wanting you to," she replied. "I want you to see my rock mantel. Mr. Ford and I value it so much." The mantel, beautifully designed and finished, was in the diningroom. The furniture here was plain, but clean and well-kept.

In the bedroom everything was arranged so that she could do her own house work. Noticing that she had only one narrow cot in the room, I asked where Mr. Ford slept. She laughed, "That's all we need. I'd have twin beds or a double bed, but you see, I have to have Mr. Ford to brace me at night, and he might roll away from me in a double bed. I can go to bed now and sleep like a baby because I work all day. I never hire any work done. Sometimes people come along wanting something to eat or wear and I let 'em help me out some then so they can earn what they need so bad." "Do you own your house now, Mrs. Ford? You said something about a loan or mortgage on it," I inquired. "Well we're

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still paying on it, and if we keep loving God we'll soon get it paid for. That's where God helped us again. You see, the mortgage was to be paid off on a certain day. We'd put in for another loan and it hadn't gone through, so of course the place was advertised for sale. Well, the man that put the house up 8 didn't show up at the sale a t'all, and in a few days the loan went through and we used it to pay off the old mortgage. We've managed to make our payments on the new loan regularly ever since.

"I have my telephone fixed so I can carry it anywhere over the house that I want to. When I go to any part of the house I always take it with me. I have friends that I've never seen that call me 'most every day for a chat. I take orders over the telephone for our farm produce and have it sent in to town 'most every day. And, too, I have my electric lights, frigidaire, electric iron, and radio. Most of all I have my God who is the cause of my having what I have today.

"I do lots of political work on my telephone, too. You see, that's the only way that I can help, and I do all I can that way."

As I prepared to leave I told her, "I've enjoyed this short visit with you, Mrs. Ford."

"I'm go glad you came, and do come again or call me sometimes over the telephone," she said, as she walked her chair toward the front door.